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and later, of M. Recappe of Paris. More recently it was one of the treasures of the famous Chabriere-Arles collection of Paris and Lyon, from which, with one remove, it passed to the City Art Museum.

It was exhibited at the Exposition de l'union Centrale des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1865 and at the Exposition Retrospective de Lyon, 1877.

Illustrations of the cabinet appear in Geraud's *Exposition Retrospective de Lyon 1877*, plate XLV: Edmond Bonnaffe's *Le Meuble en France au XVIIe siecle*, Paris 1877, page 69; Edouard Bajot's *Encyclopedie du Meuble*, Paris, Vol. 1, plate XV (Armoires Section). It also is illustrated and described by Gaston Migeon (in *Les Arts*, October 1903, page 14,) who writes "of absolute purity is a little cupboard with two tiers, and four folding doors, decorated with incrustations of marble, with the figures of *Summer* and *Winter*, *Mars* and *Venus*. This, truly, is a piece constructed in accordance with the exact laws of architecture, which Androuet Du Cerceau would not have disowned. With what delicacy and with what charm the flower subjects have been finely carved in the wood, a beautiful piece of walnut of close and hard grain."

Such an object, therefore, is not merely to be considered as the acquisition of a piece of furniture of fine distinction, but also as a work of art which reflects the civilization of France during one of her most luxurious and brilliant periods.

S. L. S.

AN EXAMPLE OF SILVER-SMITHING OF THE XVI CENTURY

It would be difficult to account for the marked excellence of certain work,

if not of most work, at high water periods in the history of art if one did not take into account the various sources that contributed. Metalwork in the XV and XVI centuries enjoyed a golden period as a result of many influences.

The incentive given to all arts through liberal patronage, laws, customs, and new motives in decoration, had a stimulating effect on the crafts; the flowering of the Renaissance brought about a fresh phase of art, not necessarily an improvement on the Gothic style (from some points of view, not so good) but different.

The nature of these influences can be learned from the history of the times; the rise of great families, the power of guilds, the high standard of all work and its supervision under laws that confiscated and fined for inferior materials and construction. In Paris, in the XVI century, the law against the employment of base metal in orfèvrerie was so severe that many preferred to use silver rivets rather than solder. There was a constant fluctuation, (has been in all times) in the form of silver and gold, between vessel and coinage, coinage and vessel according to the prosperity of the period, as there was in bronze a similar vacillation between statue and cannon. At one time in the history of France gold and silver plate was accepted (to put it mildly) for taxes and other "impositions" to be melted, not disposed of otherwise, which naturally led to the woeful loss of many works of art, also had the effect of producing new pieces and a great displacement of Gothic work by that in the style of the Renaissance.

No material lacked interest to the craftsman of the Gothic and Renaissance periods, a well trained man seemed to be able to express himself



ECCLESIASTICAL VESSEL IN SILVER

ITALIAN, XVI CENTURY

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efficiently in any medium, but gold and silver owing to the variety of decoration attainable, even color through the medium of enamel, were ideal materials; even among the artists who were not classed among the sculptor-goldsmiths there were few who did not design settings for jewels, caskets, or other small tasteful bits.

The laws of Florence and Sienna were easier on the goldsmiths and silversmiths, especially in the espionage clauses concerning publicity of workshops and prohibition of night work, and the jewelers of Florence have enjoyed a reputation that has lasted to their advantage to the present day. Orfevrerie, to use the term which embraces both gold and silver, had kept pace with sculpture, but in the XVI century the two arts were no longer allied; the great tradition was left and a goldsmith could design and execute his work like sculpture in small, but, as Labarte says, in place of the great compositions of Biblical subjects and from profane history the artists revived the monsters imagined by the ancients.

In the midst of vegetation relieved from the restraints of logic they reproduced the Centaurs, Pans, Syl-vains, Tritons and Nereids, all the fabulous productions of the human, animal, and vegetable world after the manner of Raphael's decorations in the Loggias of the Vatican, now translated to silver and gold and carried to an extreme by such artists as Cellini and Caradosso. It was in this century that gold and silversmithing became an industrial art, its product a commodity.

The extent to which the precious metals may be used to express a decorative feeling is shown in a piece lately purchased by the Museum. It is a

piece that may be called a pyxis if not a Pyx, made for the Cardinal d'Altems in the XVI century and called Florentine work. It is large for a vessel of the kind, for a height of four to six inches was a good, not to say great, height for a pyx before it began the evolution into its present small form; it is nearly nine inches high from the base to the top of the crucifix.

The drum is four inches in height and also diameter, standing on a low base, with a crest or parapet of open-work within which the cover fits; the motive is architectural, six panels of ornament divided by pilasters of baluster form, the cover in three stages, flattened dome, capstan-like cove supported by scroll buttresses, scroll finial out of which rises the crucifix fleuronné.

In one panel is the coat of arms of the Cardinal within a wreath, the corners filled with cherub heads; the other five panels have each a design in Renaissance ornament of great variety and remarkably fine chasing; grotesques scrolls, seed pods, grapes and leaves, with cupidons, decorative monsters and trophies, from the lowest to the highest relief, very delicate lines, fine curves, and very vigorous action on the part of the creatures who are very animated, throwing themselves into lively attitudes and seem to have been produced by their creator with as much liveliness and gusto.

The coat of arms, a shield quartered first and fourth with a winged hand holding a dagger, second and third a crowned lion rampant; the hat over it having only four rows of tassels would indicate an archbishop rather than cardinal but may not be inappropriate as the Cardinal was made Bishop of Constance in 1561.

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Only one of the six panels lacks the lightness of fancy and delicacy of touch of the rest; the one on the opposite side to that of the coat of arms, in which two amorini standing on a tazza support between them a stalk from which spring animal forms with corselets hanging from their necks; it is heavy although without the bloated quality of commercial repousse and chasing. All the other panels are delightful and make a special appeal to a metal worker; the ones to right and left of the arms of the owner in particular are models in repousse, the pushing up of the edges of the leaves of the scrolls has been carried apparently to the utmost stretching point of metal, then turned over producing an undercut and resulting intense shadow that seems scarcely possible to effect without applied pieces of silver. The design has generally for motive a garden vase or fount from which spring the scrolls on which are grafted the grotesques and the fabulous creatures then in vogue, the relief varying from the flat surface to a good quarter inch in height; some of the little heads are remarkably well modeled, as an instance, a skull which is only five sixteenths of an inch in length has been treated with such realism that it has lost some front teeth; but mere detail although sufficiently regarded is not the great point in this work, it is its excellent drawing and variety of surface, its vivacity.

The cover is perhaps by another hand; it would be rash to affirm that it is, but at least the chasing has not the same feeling shown in the panels of the drum; perhaps its general style was too pagan to suit its owner and a new one from the hands of another was commanded; and truly what grotesque scrolls, amorini and grinning fabulous monsters have to do

with ecclesiastical vessels only the Renaissance artist could imagine.

The object is ascribed to Florentine workmanship, but it is well known that in the XVI century the decoration of Italy had stamped its influence upon the metalwork of Europe and only the form of an object distinguished the work of one country from that of another: a number of great craftsmen were established in Rome, near which city the Cardinal had a residence, or the maker of this piece may have been one of his own household as was not uncommon in those days. The maker's mark on the bottom of the vessel has been stamped twice, one mark over a similar one, which makes it difficult to distinguish more than that it is a cartouche with a rampant lion, which was also one of the quarterings of the owner. The piece was at one time in the Guilhou collection of Bayonne, France.

C. P. D.

A BAS-RELIEF IN BRONZE OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

The identification of a masters' hand in a piece of sculpture, when unsupported by signature or documents, often proves to be of an unsatisfying nature; the attribution is not very sure of sticking. It is not easy to understand why the title "unknown artist" is even more unsatisfactory than the attribution at large, "school of—", "attributed to—", in museum catalogues. That the unsupported attribution is usually made on very slight ground is proved by a glance over any list of Italian sculptors and sculpture where one may read how often the words "formerly attributed to" occur; which uncertainty would lead one to believe either that the sculptors of a period worked in the same manner, or that the method of apportioning unsigned and undocu-